

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated February 26, 2003, claims 1, ³⁻⁶~~2~~, 5, ³⁻⁶~~11~~ and 12 are amended, and claims ³~~7~~-¹¹~~10~~ are canceled. Claims ³⁻⁶~~1-6~~-¹¹~~11~~ and 12 are now active in this application. No new matter has been added.

REJECTION OF CLAIMS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hosotsubo (USPN 6,009,485) in view of Tabata (USPN 6,198,542). The Examiner admits that Hosotsubo does not teach means in the server, which sends to a requested apparatus, all the distribution destination group names, or that the host can exchange information with a plurality of other apparatus through bi-directional interface. Tabata is relied upon as teaching a server that provides an information group list to the host computer after requesting of the user. The Examiner maintains that it would have been obvious to modify the communication system of Hosotsubo and provide an information group list from a server to the host computer after requesting of the user as taught by Tabata.

The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The claimed invention relates to a method and apparatus in which, when a server groups terminals (digital multifunction apparatus) and stores in the storage of the server the terminals and the groups to which the terminals belong (see Figs. 15, 16, and 17), a user registers a new terminal (communication apparatus) to one of the registered groups in the storage of the server by using the new terminal (via the communication apparatus).

In contrast, Hosotsubo describes a procedure in which specific users are selected from a list of users (Hosotsubo, Fig. 4, step S12 to S13) and a group name is then inputted so as to form a specific group composed of the selected users (Hosotsubo, Fig. 4, Step S14 to S15). Thus, Hosotsubo relates to apparatus (for) and method of *forming a new group* while the present invention relates to apparatus (for) and method of *assigning a new terminal to one of plural groups registered in the server by using the new terminal*. Assigning a new terminal to one of plural groups registered in the server by using the new terminal clearly distinguishes the claimed invention from anything disclosed in the applied prior art references. Furthermore, since the user can assign a new terminal to one of plural groups registered in the server by using the new terminal to be assigned and not the server, assigning a new terminal to one of plural groups registered in the server is significantly simplified.

Referring to Fig. 4 of Hosotsubo, the reference teaches forming a new group (Fig. 4, S12 & S13), selecting a name for the new group (Fig. 4, S14), then registering this new group with its new name in storage (25). In view of this disclosure, it is clear that the Examiner's assertion that Hosotsubo teaches an input manipulation means, provided in each image communication apparatus, which can request the image server to *send back all the destination groups*, and *specify a specific group* from among all the destination groups sent back from the image server, and *send to the image server at least the specified group together with a group registration request to register the apparatus with the specified group* after specifying the group (emphasis added), is incorrect.

Tabata discloses that a group can be listed on a display on the server side only. Tabata does not disclose or suggest that the group can be listed on the side of the digital

integrated apparatus like the claimed invention. Thus, even if the teaching of Tabata were combined with the arrangement of Hosotsubo, the claimed invention does not result. Even if it were presumed that the group listed on a display on the server side was sent to be displayed on the side of the digital integrated apparatus, this displayed group would correspond to the user list at step S12 of Hosotsubo, from which users are selected to form a new group that is to be named and then registered in the storage 25.

Consequently, even if the communication system of Hosotsubo were modified in view of the teaching of Tabata, the resulting communication system would still not have:

an input manipulation means provided in each image communication apparatus, which can request the image server to send back *all the destination groups, and specify a specific group* from among all the destination groups sent back from the image server, and *send to the image server* at least the specified group together with *a group registration request to register the image communication apparatus with the specified group* after specifying the group (emphasis added),

as recited in claim 1, or

requesting from an image communication apparatus for the image server to send back all the destination groups,

sending *all the destination groups* from said image server to said image communication apparatus in response to the request from the image communication apparatus for sending all the destination groups,

sending from an input manipulation means provided in the image communication apparatus *a request for registration* of the image communication apparatus *with a destination group*, and at least a specified destination group specified by the image communication apparatus, and

registering said image communication apparatus with the specified destination group according to the group registration request and the specified destination group sent from said image communication apparatus (emphasis added),

as recited in claim 12.

Claims 1 and 12 are amended to change the "image communication apparatus" to "a digital multifunction apparatus", claims ^{2 and 11}~~7-10~~ are cancelled, and claims ³⁻⁶~~2, 5 and 11~~ are

amended for consistency with the amendment to claim 1. Thus, amended claims 1 and 12 are further distinguishable from Hosotsubo and Tabata as these references do not disclose or suggest the digital multifunction apparatus recited in these claims.

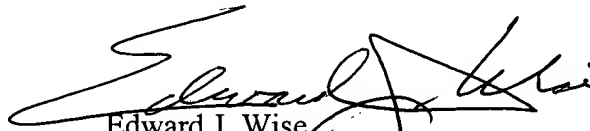
CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is urged that the application, as now amended, is in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: May 27, 2003